**Education in Britain and in Russia: Advantages and Disadvantages**

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**2017**

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**Education in Britain and in Russia: Advantages and Disadvantages**

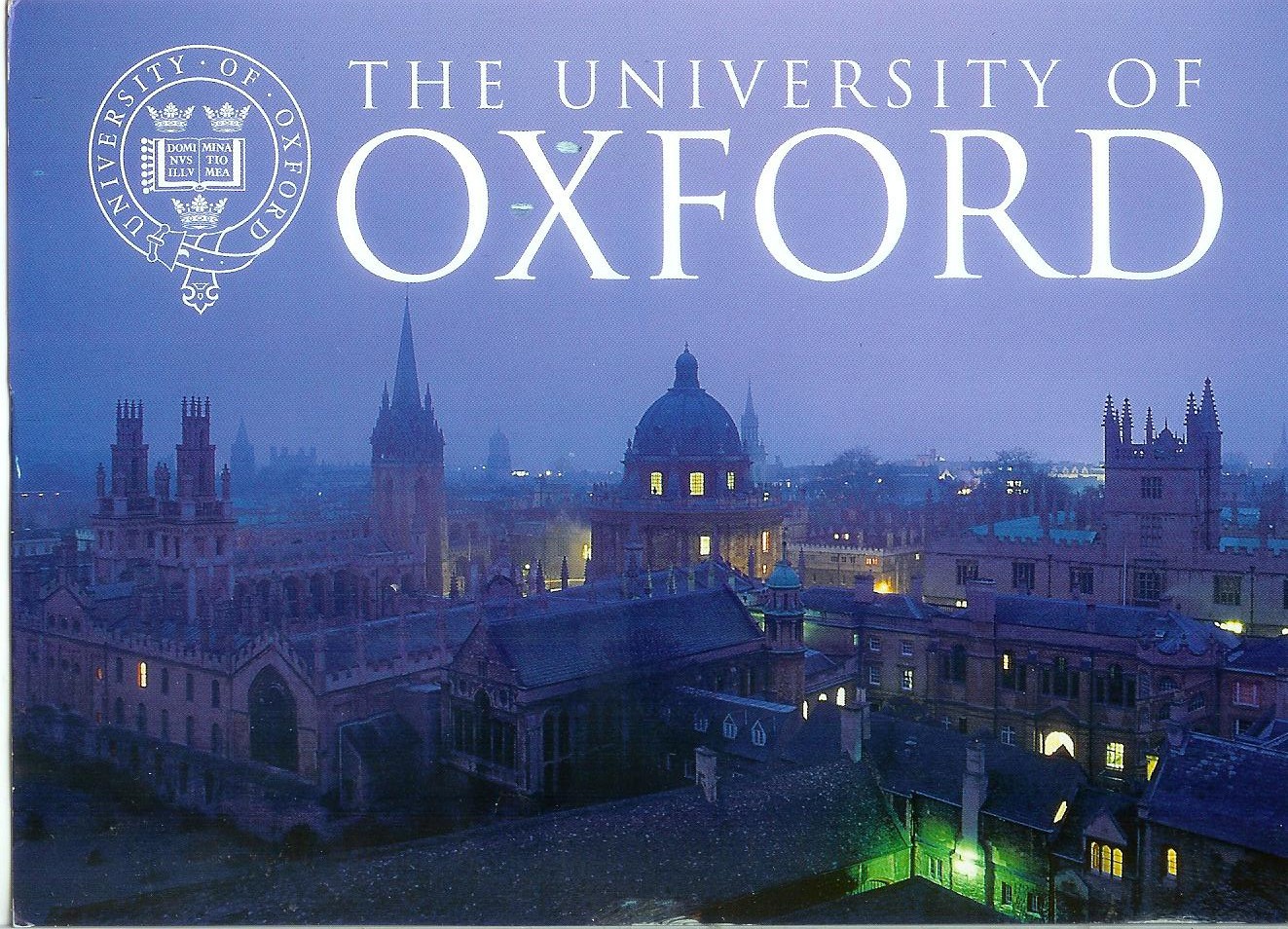
In the modern world specific conditions have made internalization of education possible. Similarities - in systems or even in ideas - that schools share internationally have led to an increase in international student exchanges. The European Socrates-Erasmus Program facilitates exchanges across European universities. The Soros Foundation provides many opportunities for students from central Asia and Eastern Europe. Programs such as the International Baccalaureate have contributed to the internationalization of education. The global campus online, led by American universities, allows free access to class materials and lecture files recorded during the actual classes.

Although the educational systems of the countries of the world have become closer, there still remain crucial differences in some of them. There are two systems of education that are of particular interest to me: British and Russian. Great Britain is the country of one of the foreign languages I learn and Russia is my homeland. In this work I would like to point out and examine the similarities and differences in both systems of education, their advantages and disadvantages.

Great Britain is a highly developed European country and its system of education is one of the most prestigious in the world. Thousands of international students come to study in Great Britain every year. There are certain reasons for it: first, British certificates of Education are recognized throughout the world, second, coming to study in Britain is a wonderful opportunity to improve one’s knowledge of English language, and especially communicative skills, that is extremely important for a future career in any international business. So why is British education so valuable? And why so many young people prefer to enter schools, colleges and universities in Britain? Let’s turn for the reasons to the history of education in Great Britain.



**The history of education in Great Britain**

The history of public education in the UK started as early as the coming of Anglo-Saxons to the British Isles. In the Middle Ages schools were aimed at teaching Latin grammar. Two universities date back to XI-XIII centuries: Oxford and Cambridge. 

During the reign of Edward VI free grammar schools were founded. Before the beginning of the XIX century the majority of schools in Britain were controlled by the Anglican Church.

But in the late XIX century a system of free compulsory primary education was formed. Further education and higher education were also developing. University of London and King’s College were opened in the Capital of the United Kingdom. Also some of the so-called “redbrick universities” were built in Bristol, Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds and Sheffield for those willing to study sciences and engineering.

In 1972 education became compulsory for all students between the ages of 5 (4 in Northern Ireland) and 16. In England, compulsory education or training has been extended to 18 for those born after 1 September 1997. This full-time education doesn’t need to be at a school and a number of parents prefer to home-educate.

**School education in Great Britain**

Every child in Great Britain can receive free school education, regardless of his nationality, race, religion and social status of his parents. There are state-funded schools and private schools.

School education in Great Britain consists of two stages:

* Primary school (for children under 11-12 years old),
* Secondary school (for children from 11 to 16 years old).

If parents choose home-education for their children, they must obtain a legitimating document from a local authority that considers whether the family meets the requirements appropriate for education.

There are three general types of schools:

* Grammar schools, in which the accent is made high academic standards of learning, and future graduates are aimed at entering universities,
* Modern schools aimed at gaining professional qualification,
* Comprehensive schools, where academic learning and professional skills are in balance.



Some believe that British children are deprived of childhood starting school at the age of 5 or even 4. Still children of early age mostly learn by playing in schools and the atmosphere created there for learning is different from that in Russian primary classes.

Later on children learn to gain knowledge on their own and to use it for practical purposes. Children study a lot in libraries and laboratories, they have some homework, especially creative tasks and projects.

Results are accessed in writing, in the form of essays and projects. A teacher points out a problem and each child proposes a topic himself and searches through learning material.

Although children are treated individually in primary schools, statistics show that about 1/5 of all the primary school graduates need specialized educational programmes.

**State-funded schools**

Some 93% of children between the ages of 3 and 18 are in education in state-funded schools without charge (other than for activities such as swimming, theatre visits and field trips for which a voluntary payment can be requested, and limited charges at state-funded boarding schools).

Since 1998, there have been six main types of maintained (state funded) school in Great Britain:

*Academy schools*, established by the 1997-2010 Labour Government to replace poorly-performing community schools in areas of high social and economic deprivation. Their start-up costs are typically funded by private means, such as entrepreneurs or NGOs, with running costs met by Central Government and, like Foundation schools, are administratively free from direct local authority control. The 2010 Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government expanded the role of Academies in the Academy Programme, in which a wide number of schools in non-deprived areas were also encouraged to become Academies, thereby essentially replacing the role of Foundation schools established by the previous Labour government. They are monitored directly by the Department for Education.

*Community schools* (formerly county schools), in which the local authority employs the schools' staff, owns the schools' lands and buildings, and has primary responsibility for admissions.

Free schools, introduced by the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition following the 2010 general election, are newly established schools set up by parents, teachers, charities or businesses, where there is a perceived local need for more schools. They are funded by taxpayers, are academically non-selective and free to attend, and like Foundation schools and Academies, are not controlled by a local authority. They are ultimately accountable to the Secretary of State for Education. Free schools are an extension of the existing Academy Programme. The first 24 free schools opened in Autumn 2011.

*Foundation schools*, in which the governing body employs the staff and has primary responsibility for admissions. School land and buildings are owned by the governing body or by a charitable foundation. The Foundation appoints a minority of governors. Many of these schools were formerly grant maintained schools. In 2005 the Labour government proposed allowing all schools to become Foundation schools if they wished.

*Voluntary Aided schools*, linked to a variety of organisations. They can be faith schools (often the Church of England or the Roman Catholic Church), or non-denominational schools, such as those linked to London Livery Companies. The charitable foundation contributes towards the capital costs of the school (typically 10%), and appoints a majority of the school governors. The governing body employs the staff and has primary responsibility for admissions.

Voluntary Controlled schools, which are almost always church schools, with the lands and buildings often owned by a charitable foundation. However, the local authority employs the schools' staff and has primary responsibility for admissions.

State-funded primary schools are almost all local schools with a small catchment area. More than half are owned by the Local Authority, though many are (nominally) voluntary controlled and some are voluntary aided. Some schools just include infants (aged 4 to 7) and some just juniors (aged 7 to 11). Some are linked, with automatic progression from the infant school to the junior school, and some are not. A few areas still have first schools for ages around 4 to 8 and middle schools for ages 8 or 9 to 12 or 13.

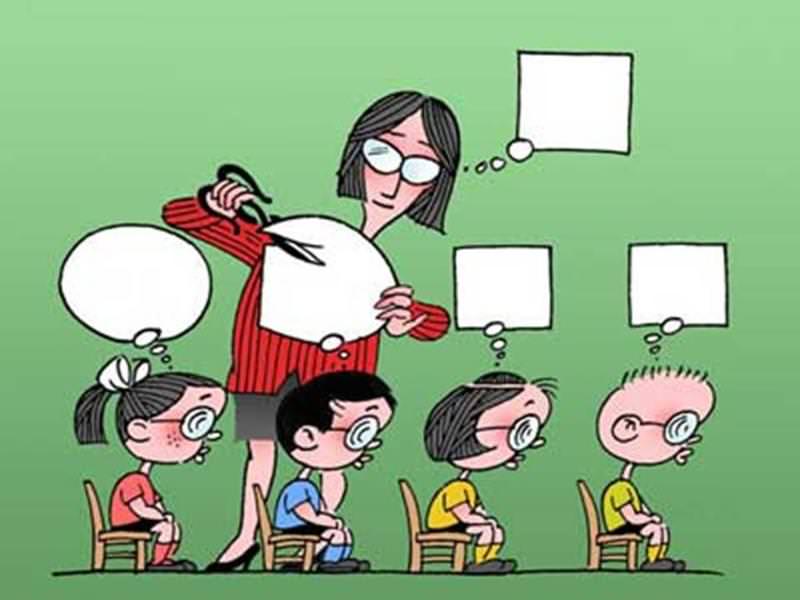
Secondary schools are mostly comprehensive, although the intake of comprehensive schools can vary widely, especially in urban areas with several local schools. Nearly 90% of state-funded secondary schools are specialist schools, receiving extra funding to develop one or more subjects in which the school specialises, which can select up to 10% of their intake for aptitude in the specialism (though relatively few of them have taken up this option). In a few areas children can enter a grammar school if they pass the eleven plus exam, there are also a number of isolated fully selective grammar schools and a few dozen partially selective schools. A significant minority of state-funded schools are faith schools, which are attached to religious groups, most often the Church of England or the Roman Catholic Church.

All state-funded schools are regularly inspected by the Office for Standards in Education, often known simply as Ofsted. Ofsted publish reports on the quality of education at a particular school on a regular basis.

**Independent schools**

Approximately 7% of school children in Great Britain attend privately run, fee-paying independent schools. Some independent schools for 13-18 year olds are known for historical reasons as 'public schools' and for 8-13 year olds as 'prep schools'. Some schools offer scholarships for those with particular skills or aptitudes, or bursaries to allow students from less financially well-off families to attend. Independent schools do not have to follow the National Curriculum, and their teachers are not required or regulated by law to have official teaching qualifications.

**Education by means other than schooling**



The 1944 Education Act stated that parents are responsible for the education of their children, "by regular attendance at school or otherwise", which allows children to be educated at home. The legislation places no requirement for parents who choose not to send their children to school to follow the National Curriculum, or to give formal lessons, or to follow school hours and terms, and parents do not need to be qualified teachers. A small but increasing numbers of parents do choose to educate their children outside the conventional school systems. Officially referred to as "Elective Home Education", teaching ranges from structured homeschooling (using a school-style curriculum) to less-structured unschooling. Education Otherwise has supported parents who wished to educate their children outside school since the 1970s. The state provides no financial support to parents who choose to educate their children outside of school.

**Post-16 education**

Students at both state schools and independent schools typically take GCSE examinations, which mark the end of compulsory education in school. Above school-leaving age, the independent and state sectors are similarly structured. In the 16–18 age group, sixth form education is not compulsory, but mandatory education or training until the age of 18 is being phased in under the Education and Skills Act 2008.

This took effect for 16-year-olds in 2013 and for 17-year-olds in September 2015. While students may still leave school on the last Friday in June, they must remain in education of some form until their 18th birthday.



***Queen Ethelburga’s College (York) is one of the leaders in the UK for A-Level Results***

Students over 16 typically study in the sixth form of a school, in a separate sixth form college, or in a Further Education (FE) College. Courses at FE colleges, referred to as further education courses, can also be studied by adults over 18. Students typically study Level 3 qualifications such as A-levels, BTEC National awards and level 3 NVQs. Some 16–18 students will be encouraged to study Key Skills in Communication, Application of Number, and Information Technology at this time.

**Higher education**

Higher education in England is provided by Higher Education (HE) colleges, university colleges, universities and private colleges. Students normally enter higher education as undergraduates from age 18 onwards, and can study for a wide variety of vocational and academic qualifications, including certificates of higher education and higher national certificates at level 4, diplomas of higher education, higher national diplomas and foundation degrees at level 5, bachelor's degrees (normally with honours) at level 6, and integrated master's degrees and degrees in medicine, dentistry, and veterinary science at level 7.

 ***The University of Edinburgh***

The typical first degree offered at British universities is the bachelor's degree with honours, which usually lasts for three years, although more vocational foundation degrees, typically lasting two years (or full-time equivalent) are also available in some institutions. Many institutions now offer an integrated master's degree, particularly in STEM subjects, as a first degree, which typically lasts for four years, the first three years running parallel to the bachelor's course. During a first degree students are known as undergraduates.

**The history of education in Russia**

Between the 10th and 13th centuries Russia developed a high civilization, which formed the foundation of the Russian culture in the following centuries. During this period numerous cultural treasures were accumulated. The written works of the time show that the level of knowledge on most natural phenomena was as high as that of Ancient Greece.

Monasteries were cultural and educational centres. They had large libraries and well-equipped book-making shops, in which not only church manuscripts were copied and translated but original books were written. Today we can confidently say that Ancient Russia was a state of high culture and knowledge.

In pre-revolutionary Russia there was a network of primary schools for common people. Nevertheless illiteracy among common people was very high. Well-off people taught their children in grammar schools, commercial schools or secondary schools teaching no classics.



The history of higher education begins from 1755 when the first University was founded in Moscow on the initiative of M.V. Lomonosov.

**Russian schools**

Russia has one of the best mass-education systems in the world, producing a literacy rate of 98%. The system consists of obligatory basic education and higher education.

Education in Russia is compulsory for children between the ages of 6 and 15. It consists of primary school education for ages 6-10, followed by senior school for ages 10-15. If a pupil of secondary school wishes to go on in higher education, he or she must remain to complete secondary school for 2 more years, from ages 15-17.

Primary and secondary school includes 11 years of study. Every school has a core curriculum of academic subjects. After completing this stage, pupils are awarded the Certificate of Secondary Complete General Education.



***School 1253 (ex-23) with extended learning of English – one of the best schools in Moscow***

At the age of 15, children may choose to enter a vocational school or non-university institute. These typically offer programmes of academic subjects and a programme of training in a technical field until students reach 17 or 18. Such institutions are now known as colleges.

*School Hours and Holidays*

The school day normally starts at 8 a.m. and finishes at 1 or 2 in the afternoon. Students generally attend class 5 days a week, although some schools require extra study on Saturdays.

The Russian school year is comprised of 4 terms with vacations in between; one week in November, two weeks in January, one week in March and nearly 3 months in summer. A school year continues from September 1 until the final week of May, with exams in June.

A typical class lasts 40 - 45 minutes with a 5 -15 minute break between the classes. In primary school students have 4 classes a day. This increases to 5 or 6 classes a day in secondary school, and 6 or 7 at a senior high school.

Classwork often means reciting and written and oral testing. Criticism by the teacher in front of the class is frequent. If a student does not perform to standard, they will be ‘left back’ to remain another year. A normal class consists of 20-30 students. In primary school, pupils have one teacher for all the subjects taught.

*Subjects and Grades*

Some subjects are mandatory such as Russian literature, Russian language, Russian history, world history and the maths and sciences. In addition, there are specialized schools that concentrate on specific subjects. Students are normally graded on a scale from 2 - 5, with 5 being the top grade. Each student has his or her “diary”; a personal book of academic achievements in which teachers record the given grades.

*Private and International Schools*

Private schools are relatively uncommon in Russia. Such schools emphasize learning English and other critical skills. Unlike state schools, private schools usually charge tuition fees. There are also international schools for expat children in major Russian cities, such as the Anglo-American School of Moscow. Established by the US, UK and Canadian Embassies in Moscow. The school features state of the art facilities and equipment.

**Higher Education in Russia**

Under the Constitution of the RF, citizens have the right to free secondary vocational education and training and higher professional education if it is being obtained for the first time. Russian citizens are entitled to education irrespective of gender, race, ethnicity, language, origin, residence, religion, convictions, membership of public organizations, age, health, social status.



***MGIMO - my alma mater***

In 2007, amendments to the current legislation introduced the two cycle system: the first cycle – Bachelor (duration of study of four years), the second cycle – Master (duration of study of two years building on the previous cycle). The one-cycle traditional system is also retained (duration of study no less than five years, for those professions where the two cycles have not been introduced). In line with these amendments, the Ministry of Education and Science has drawn up a new list of pedagogical areas and training for professions.

Changes to the concept and of the State Education Standards for higher education were also introduced to make them more outcome-oriented and to offer greater academic freedom.

**Conclusion**

With the introduction of EGE (Unified State Exam) Russian system of education have become closer to the British, still is doesn’t totally correspond with the European standards. It is one of the main drawbacks of Russian education in comparison to education in Great Britain.

The good thing about Russian higher education is that it can be free. In Great Britain students pay for higher education though they can obtain scolarships and grants for extraordinary achievements in learning or sports.

In Great Britain students can also apply for credits for educational purposes. In Russia it is seldom practiced. Students in Russia can be sponsored by prospective employers.

QS World University Rankings is an annual publication of university rankings by Quacquarelli Symonds (QS). The QS system comprises the global overall and subject rankings. It is the only international ranking to have received International Ranking Expert Group (IREG) approval, and is viewed as one of the most widely read of its kind.

According to the QS Higher Education System Strength Ranking Great Britain takes place 2 and Russia place 26.

According to the QS Graduate Employability Ranking the University of Cambridge takes place 5 and the University of Oxford – the 8th place. Moscow State University and Moscow University of International Relations rank only 101-150 in this list. I must admit that Moscow State University ranks #13 in the World Universities ranking by subject – Linguistics.

These results speak for themselves: Russian system of education still has to catch up with the British one.

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